United Nations S/PV.5470

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5470th meeting

Tuesday, 20 June 2006, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Løj	(Denmark)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2006/361)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-39548 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2006/361)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Austria and Serbia in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the members of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Raskovic-Ivic (Serbia) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Jessen-Petersen to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/361, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

As members all know, this is the last meeting of the Security Council at which Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen will represent UNMIK as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. His work has been remarkable; he has performed under very delicate political circumstances with great skill. I therefore take special pleasure, on behalf of the Security Council, in thanking Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen for his outstanding and tireless efforts over the past two years as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Kosovo.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen: I thank you, Madam, for your kind words and for inviting me once again to brief the Security Council on developments in Kosovo.

Denmark was also, I recall, in the chair in May 2005 when this body decided to launch the comprehensive review of the situation in Kosovo. It was based on the findings of that review that, last October, the Security Council endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that a process should begin to determine Kosovo's future status. It is that process, now well under way under the leadership of Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, that is at the centre of current events in Kosovo.

Let me begin by saying that Kosovo today presents a picture of a society making steady progress. In saying that, I want to acknowledge the great determination and energy which Prime Minister Çeku has brought to Government since his appointment on 10 March. I am therefore delighted that the Prime Minister is with us here today and also that he has addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council.

Standards implementation is the exemplar of that progress. In my last report to the Council, covering events up to 20 December 2005, I expressed regret that the pace of standards implementation had slowed in the second half of 2005. By February, I was able to report here that the Government of Kosovo had begun to respond to those criticisms and that the process was

getting back on track. My latest technical review, reflecting events up to 30 April 2006, shows an across-the-board revitalization of the process. The Secretary-General's report before the Council today echoes those judgments and reinforces my observations that the performance of the Kosovo authorities has become dynamic and progressive as never before. There is, of course, a need for still further progress, but if the current momentum continues — and I am confident that it will — we can expect further concrete achievements over the coming months.

The pace of policy implementation has been matched by a far greater willingness on the part of Kosovo's new leadership to take the lead in reaching out to minority communities, in particular to the Kosovo Serbs. The most recent example of that is the Prime Minister's initiative to establish a community security council, which met for the first time last Friday. The council brings together the Government of Kosovo, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Force and other key players in an effort to promote improvements in the living conditions of Kosovo's most vulnerable communities — at this moment, notably, the Kosovo Serbs.

Despite those efforts, however, it remains a fact that the situation for many Kosovo Serbs remains very difficult. Many of them feel confused, exposed and isolated, and do not know what to think about the future. In the final analysis, Kosovo Serb communities are concerned about the status process, although I have detected in my many contacts with them all over Kosovo a willingness to start considering what life might be like after final status, including on the outcomes they might not welcome. All too often, the only message reaching Kosovo Serbs tells them not to engage with the majority. That is not healthy for the more open and integrated society we all want to see.

As an example, whenever there is any crime in which the victim is a Kosovo Serb, an ethnic motive is often proclaimed, usually without any evidence. Not only is that unfair to Kosovo as a society — a society, incidentally, in which violent crime is decreasing overall; more worryingly, it also perpetuates a climate of insecurity among Kosovo Serb communities. Of course, violent crimes need to be solved and prosecuted if citizens are to have faith in the justice system. We would all like to see quick results whenever harm is done to any citizen, but it is no service to the Kosovo Serbs themselves to present them only as targets and victims. Despite isolated incidents — and they really are isolated — the picture as it is painted does not correspond to the reality of Kosovo as it is now.

I therefore call again upon the Serbian authorities to work with us and the Kosovo Government to provide factual information about current events so that we do not promote a climate of fear and further isolation. I welcome the Contact Group's recent letter to the Government in Belgrade making those same points.

At this time of flux, as a new Kosovo is being built around them, a growing number of Kosovo Serbs would like to have a voice in the political process and in Kosovo's governmental and parliamentary institutions, but they feel that they cannot do so until Belgrade gives its consent. That has been the case for more than two years now. I do not see any merit in Belgrade's isolationist policy from the point of view of Kosovo Serbs. I do not see how the Kosovo Serbs can make informed choices and decisions about their own future within Kosovo if they are not even permitted to take part in the democratic processes there, be it centrally or locally.

At the grass-roots level, the Serbian Government's directive, which has obliged Kosovo Serbs working for certain Kosovo institutions to choose between their Belgrade and Pristina salaries, is, I am afraid, a divisive move and does a disservice to Kosovo Serbs at this sensitive time. Needless to say, in presenting those points to the Council, I take the opportunity also to call on Belgrade, as the Contact Group has done in recent days, to withdraw that damaging directive and to give its consent to those political actors in the Kosovo Serb communities who want to work in the interests of their community, in partnership with the institutions and Government of Kosovo.

Amidst those difficult issues, there have been some positive moves. In particular, I welcome the signing on 6 June of a returns protocol between UNMIK, Belgrade and Pristina, which should enable returns to take place on an agreed basis. The numbers of returns are steady, although still very low in absolute terms. However, there are currently more people wanting to return than there is available funding. We need to see a significant increase in both numbers of

returns and resources to support returns in order for those returns to be sustainable.

As I mentioned at the start of my presentation today, the status process is of the highest importance in Kosovo political life. Everything we do today is done against the background of managing expectations about and preparing for a settlement. It is the status process above all that is behind the reinvigoration of the political process in Kosovo. I would like in particular to acknowledge the spirit of cooperation which has characterized the Kosovo negotiators in the unity team and political group. For this, credit is due not only to President Sejdiu's leadership, but also to Prime Minister Çeku, Assembly President Berisha and, equally, to the opposition leader, Hachim Thaci and Ventran Sorai.

UNMIK is not a player in the status process. Our job is to fulfil our mandate as set forth in resolution 1244 (1999). But having said that, from the start it has been important to me that the activities of UNMIK in Kosovo should be consistent with and supportive of the status process being conducted out of Vienna. With that process gaining momentum, it is clear that we are moving towards the end of the UNMIK mandate. Much work has already been done on what will follow it. Of course, this work cannot prejudge what this Council might decide. Nevertheless, useful preparations are being made. The preparation already undertaken and the work that we will continue to do with partner organizations should allow UNMIK to achieve an orderly exit when the time comes so that Kosovo can experience an orderly transition.

Naturally, the status process carries with it risks as well as opportunities. Tensions may well rise as the process moves towards its conclusion. I am deeply concerned to see how violent crimes can quickly become politicized and used to provoke tensions and divisions, in particular, in the northern part of Kosovo.

In this context, it is important at this crucial moment that no measures are taken by any political actors in the region that may foment instability. We will never be able to entirely eliminate the risk of security incidents in a volatile environment such as Kosovo. But we are alert to the dangers, and we have been working more closely with the Kosovo Force (KFOR) — whose commander and whose members I would like to take this opportunity to salute — on strategies to respond to any eventuality and to keep down the risk of incidents that might escalate into something worse.

Indeed, the rule of law, as a whole, remains an issue of paramount importance for Kosovo. In some areas, much has been achieved. For example, we are proud of the development and performance of the Kosovo Police Service and the progress it has made since its establishment under UNMIK's aegis.

But there are areas where we will need to improve, and more needs to be done in the field of justice. I welcome the recent establishment in Pristina of a European Union planning team that will work with UNMIK to ensure that the rule of law sectors continue to receive the attention they need up to and beyond the end of our mandate. The future of Kosovo must be built on the solid foundation of the rule of law.

The year 2006 is extraordinary for Kosovo. It is vital for stability and economic and social progress in Kosovo and the region that the status process be brought to an early and successful conclusion. I am aware, of course, of some voices that say that everything is happening too quickly and that that introduces unnecessary risks. I hold the opposite view. I hold that after seven years of interim administration in Kosovo, the society is ready — indeed impatient — to move on. In fact, it would be a far greater risk to keep Kosovo in limbo for much longer.

At the moment, there is a feeling in Kosovo that progress is being made under a new, dynamic leadership. This dynamism is based on a vision of a transformed future, a future based on the Guiding Principles that there be no return of Kosovo to the pre-1999 situation, no partition of Kosovo and no union of Kosovo with any country or part of another country, and that the status outcome be acceptable to the majority in Kosovo while the rights of minorities are respected and protected.

UNMIK administration has extraordinary achievements to its credit. UNMIK will of course respect its mandate until the very end. However, there are now diminishing returns from this mandate and limits to what can be achieved by an international administration in the absence of clarity on status. Interim administration has been in place for seven years without a clearly defined endpoint. It is time for us, for Kosovo and for the region to move on.

Madam President, as you said, this report will be my last one to the Security Council before leaving my post at the end of this month. It has been a fascinating, at times difficult, but always rewarding post. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Security Council for the unstinting support I have received since taking up the appointment two years ago. I am confident that the Council will, when the time comes, take a decision that will allow Kosovo to build the democratic, multi-ethnic society it envisions, and for which, I am proud to say, the United Nations has helped to lay the foundations.

I have served most of my United Nations career in the humanitarian field, and I have seen too much suffering in the Western Balkans over the last 15 years. My biggest hope as I leave my post is that the coming status agreement in Kosovo will finally allow the victims of the conflict on all sides to become the beneficiaries of a peaceful and lasting settlement, leading to a better future that they so thoroughly deserve.

The President: I thank Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

Mrs. Raskovic-Ivic (Serbia): I am particularly pleased to be able to greet those present here today and express my respect for this body.

First of all, I would like to single out the singular importance of the Security Council as a guarantor for the preservation of universal principles of international law and the entire world order in establishing, building and ensuring future peace in Kosovo and Metohija and in the entire region of South-Eastern Europe.

As the successor State to the former Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia is firmly convinced that only by consistent implementation of international principles, such as the inviolability of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of democratic States, is it possible to maintain and promote peace and stability in the Western Balkans. We deem it particularly important to reiterate that Serbia is absolutely ready to assume its share of responsibility in the process of a successful resolution of the issue of Kosovo and Metohija on the basis of international law and in accordance with modern democratic values.

We come before the Security Council with full confidence, with the expectation that it will make its crucial contribution in the spirit of the documents it has previously adopted, primarily resolution 1244 (1999), of 10 June 1999, which unambiguously reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. We are firmly convinced that the Council's future decisions also will be consistent with these fundamental United Nations principles.

We welcome the further encouragement of the dialogue on Kosovo and Metohija, that is, with respect to achieving a solution regarding the future status of Kosovo and Metohija. For Serbia, that status is substantial autonomy within the internationally recognized borders of Serbia.

However, I must point out that the report on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2006/361), which is before the Council today, is not sufficiently clear, mostly because it proceeds more on the basis of unrealistic expectations than of facts. The report does not accurately reflect the situation regarding the implementation of standards.

I would like to recall that, in his comprehensive review of the situation in Kosovo (S/2005/635, annex), Ambassador Kai Eide rightly indicated that the only way to make progress is through the process of establishing future status and continuing the implementation of standards. Unfortunately, so far there have been no serious signs that any of those perfectly fitting and appropriate recommendations are being taken into account. Little progress has been made to resolve issues relating to property rights; returns have been almost frozen for a number of years now; and instruments for the protection of human rights and the rule of law are dead letters. According to a report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 44,000 cases are pending before the courts, while 17,000 damage compensation claims are on hold.

It is well known that human rights in Kosovo and Metohija have been violated on a massive scale. The very right to survival of Serbs and non-Albanians — a definite minority in the province — has been threatened. Every week — sometimes every day — we and UNMIK witness various forms of violence

perpetrated against the non-Albanian population. I must point out that two thirds of the non-Albanian population have been expelled from Kosovo and Metohija. In reality, low-intensity extremist violence is tolerated in Kosovo and Metohija, and there is no progress in the reconciliation process among the in-conflict communities.

Since June 1999, 929 Serbs and other non-Albanians have been killed or reported missing, and there have been 7,000 ethnically motivated attacks, 4,830 of them terrorist attacks. All of those crimes have gone unpunished. From 25 October 2005, when negotiations were announced and the Albanians were sent a clear signal about the need to freeze conflict actions, until recently, there have been at least 200 ethnically motivated attacks — that is, there is reasonable suspicion that they are such — against Serbs and other non-Albanians, in which 2 people died and 26 have been seriously wounded.

It is noteworthy that roads used by Serbs to travel from isolated areas have been targeted of late. Initially — at the beginning of last year — those attacks were focused on central Kosovo, on Lipljan and Gracanica. In the second half of the year, a series of 12 terrorist attacks was perpetrated on the road connecting Strpce with other Serbian communities, while buses on the road leading from the municipality of Gora to Prizren were shelled. This spring, the brunt of the attacks shifted to northern Kosovo and Metohija — the municipalities of Kosovska Mitrovica and Zvecan. The attacks were committed mostly at night, with automatic weapons being used against vehicles known to ferry Serbs and other non-Albanians.

Kosovo Albanian violence on 17 and 18 March 2004 demonstrated that stability in that part of Europe is fragile and that reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians is far from a reality. As many as 5,000 people were expelled, eight people were killed and 35 Orthodox churches and 935 homes were destroyed, as were 10 health institutions and Serb schools, in just two days. Six towns and nine villages have been ethnically cleansed. Of the 50,000 people who took part in the large-scale Albanian extremist action, only six men were remanded in custody. For the sake of comparison, I would like to point out that in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina there have been fewer than 200 ethnically motivated incidents over the past 10 years, while the same number occurred in Kosovo and Metohija in the space of only seven months.

The international community's proclaimed objective of making Kosovo a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic society is still far from being achieved. It has to be acknowledged that economically Kosovo is extremely underdeveloped: 600,000 able-bodied people, including 70 per cent of the young, are unemployed; the black market is flourishing; and human beings are trafficked and goods are smuggled. There is no rule of law and corruption is rife. Pervasive organized crime hampers economic recovery and presents a serious political, economic and security problem, as it primarily undermines people's faith in institutions.

The participation of Serbs in the work of the Provisional Institutions is one of the topics addressed in the report — and one of the true problems. We consider that it is of the utmost importance for Kosovo Serbs to participate and to play an active role in the political life of Kosovo and Metohija, but only under the condition that their participation is meaningful, that it is not merely a matter of political decorum and that the out-voting of Serbs is prevented. That implies that those institutions must be democratic and that all interested parties should be engaged in working towards the democratization of Kosovo and Metohija society.

Decentralization in Kosovo and Metohija is of great importance to the Serb community. It is not only about establishing closer links between citizens and the authorities, or about ensuring better and more efficient services to citizens. For Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, decentralization is a vital condition, enabling survival, security and return. That is why the Serb negotiating team proposed the strengthened self-government of Serb majority municipalities, horizontal ties among municipalities and direct issue-oriented and transparent ties with Belgrade. Those proposals have nothing to do with the idea of the division of Kosovo and Metohija, as claimed by the Albanian representatives. They are merely a concrete and institutional response to the existing situation, in which the survival of the Serb community — and thereby the multi-ethnic character of Kosovo and Metohija — has ultimately been threatened.

The activities of the working groups established on the basis of the outcome of the Vienna meeting in 2003 are an important aspect in defining future status and in the peace process. The resolution of the issues of missing persons, returns, transport and energy

cooperation would certainly improve the overall situation and reduce the level of political tension. However, so far neither UNMIK nor Pristina has been overly enthusiastic about the process.

In our view, the security situation in Kosovo and Metohija is extremely precarious. We cannot agree with the assertion in the report that the security situation is stable, with a small number of inter-ethnic incidents. We express concern about the new wave of attacks against Serbian representatives, aimed at further intimidating the Serbian population right before the start of status negotiations.

The current situation in northern Kosovo and Metohija and the deployment of new KFOR contingents in the area should also be borne in mind. I would like to believe that their presence will strengthen security and lead to the establishment of cooperation with the Serbian community and its leaders. I also hope that we will be able to launch a joint struggle against organized crime and violence in the near future.

Considering the lack of progress with regard to the freedom of movement of minorities, the cessation of the operation of inter-city bus lines for minority communities because of budget constraints is of great concern. We also consider that the decision by the international police to cease police escorts for Serbian political representatives will lead to the further isolation of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

In the context of the unjustifiably accelerated transfer of competences to the Provisional Institutions in the field of the rule of law, we consider that the establishment of the Ministry of Police and the Ministry of Justice and the accelerated transfer of competences from UNMIK to those Ministries at the time of the launching of the political process to address the future status of Kosovo and Metohija are intended to influence the outcome of the negotiations by supporting the request of Kosovo Albanians — that is, at prejudging the future status of Kosovo and Metohija.

I would like to point once again to the observation in the comprehensive review of Ambassador Eide that the justice system is the weakest of Kosovo's institutions and that the further transfer of competences in those areas should be considered with great caution.

The failure to include certain facts in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the findings and conclusions with respect to corruption at Pristina airport (A/60/720) serves to conceal the real situation and to prevent the Security Council from gaining proper insight into the realities of Kosovo and Metohija and the effects of UNMIK's work. My Government considers the conclusions in the report to be very important, particularly the following:

> "With UNMIK peacekeeping operations winding down and in the light of the widely held view that the United Nations will withdraw from Kosovo in 2006, the reluctance by senior Mission management to address fraud and corruption will have a devastating impact on public perception inside and outside of Kosovo, as the United Nations will be seen as escaping from the problems rather than solving them." (*A/60/720, para. 46*)

My Government and hundreds of thousands of expellees are particularly concerned over the lack of progress in returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 16,000 Serbian and other non-Albanian internally displaced persons have returned to the province; but according to the data available to the Coordinating Centre for Kosovo and Metohija and the Republic of Serbia Commissariat for Refugees, that number is only 2,000. Others have returnee status for largely administrative reasons. Take, for example, the case of the town of Prizren, where Albanians, Serbs and Turks — 12,000 members of each of those three national communities — lived before the war. Eight hundred Serbs are on the Prizren return list, but in fact only 16 Serbs live there.

We believe that the report before us provides a general assessment that the return and integration process continues to face challenges, but that it does not reflect the true picture of the problem. The assessment in the Secretary-General's report on UNMIK concerning the visible support of the Provisional Institutions in Kosovo and Metohija for the return process is unfounded. Special mention should be made of the report's observation that no progress has been made in the reconstruction of the property destroyed in March 2004. Of course, Belgrade supports all activities aimed at creating conditions for the return of expellees. In that context, we support the signing of the Protocol on IDP returns by representatives of the Coordinating Centre for Kosovo and Metohija of the Government of Serbia and by representatives of the

Pristina working group on returns. At the same time, I would like to point out that the conditions for returns will not be met by the Protocol, but by work in the field.

As you stated, Madam President, today, 20 June, is World Refugee Day. It has been seven years since Serbs and other non-Albanians were expelled from Kosovo, and they are still waiting to come home. In that connection, it is worrisome that since the previous Security Council meeting on this item, held in February (see S/PV.5373), no tangible progress has been made in the implementation of standards. The fact that no substantial progress has been made in the six rounds of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo is also a source of concern. Unfortunately, the flexible position of our negotiating team has not been reciprocated by the Albanian team, which has embraced a firm and single-minded position. Such a position serves more to fuel expectations and raise tensions among the majority Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija than to help find solutions to serious problems in the province. The tensions have also been heightened by certain representatives of the international community — UNMIK, among others — claiming that the independence of Kosovo is the only possible outcome, or even a fait accompli.

Martti Ahtisaari has a narrow space in which to manoeuvre, but there is room for compromise. The narrow space for a solution can be found somewhere between the situation in Kosovo and Metohija up to 1999 and independence. Independence is not a compromise; independence means merely succumbing to one of those two positions. Serbia is totally opposed to any redrawing of the borders and believes that any "either-or" solution — making one side a winner and the other a loser — would not be good. Our negotiating team, political leadership and general public deeply believe that a solution must be found through negotiations, that it must not be imposed and that both sides must engage more wholeheartedly and be prepared for alternative solutions.

For its part, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has launched two initiatives aimed at providing new impetus to the negotiations. In its first initiative — submitted to the members of the Contact Group and Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari on 19 May — my Government proposed that direct negotiations be started on the future status of Kosovo and Metohija. According to that proposal, direct negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina on the status of Kosovo and Metohija would begin with a high-level round of negotiations and continue with a discussion of key elements that would crystallise the status and that would be conducted in four working groups, on constitutional matters, security, economic questions and decentralization.

In its second initiative, submitted on 30 May, the Government of the Republic of Serbia presented a concrete proposal on the future status of Kosovo and Metohija. It is a compromise between two extreme positions: the status of Kosovo and Metohija prior to 1999 on the one hand, and independence on the other. It is the most concrete proposal that our side could have made, offering more than the standard autonomy that is known and practised in European countries. The proposal also calls for the conclusion of an international agreement that would be reached through status negotiations and would include basic principles and concrete provisions regarding the future status of Kosovo and Metohija. It would be signed and guaranteed by Serbia and the United Nations.

Serbia is ready, together with the Security Council and in line with international norms, to make every effort to reach a compromise solution to Kosovo and Metohija. We also trust that the United Nations and the international community will not succumb to threats of violence and pressure to break up a democratic State. We are convinced that that would thoroughly undermine the very foundations of the international order. Serbia is resolutely opposed to any attempt to impose a solution to Kosovo and Metohija, since that would imply dividing the country and taking away a part of its territory.

Since we believe that we embrace the same principles as those on which the legal order and the United Nations are based, we have no doubt that the Security Council will act in a just manner, applying the same rules and universal principles to Serbia that are valid for all members of the Security Council and States Members of the United Nations. I am fully convinced that the principles of international law and order substantially supersede any form of legal violence.

Convinced that the members of the Council will devote due attention to these positions, I express to you, Madam President, my gratitude for having been able to address this body.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation acknowledges the presence of the Prime Minister of Kosovo in the Council Chamber this morning. My delegation is also grateful to Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative briefing. We pay tribute to him and to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for their commitment and dedication in assisting Kosovo in the implementation of the standards and for their support for Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, in the talks on future status. My delegation also recognizes the presence of Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, and thanks her for her insightful statement.

We congratulate the new leadership of Kosovo and commend the democratic process through which they were elected. That is a demonstration of the political maturity that will continue to be required in the progress towards a comprehensive settlement of Kosovo's future status.

When we discussed the issue of Kosovo in February this year (see S/PV.5373), we noted that progress had been made in the preparations for the talks on the future status of Kosovo. We were pleased to note that four rounds of direct talks among the parties have since been held in Vienna. However, we regret that the absence of Kosovo Serbs in these talks has continued to be highly conspicuous. The Secretary-General's report cites several other areas where the participation of Kosovo Serbs is lacking or has remained marginal.

Tanzania believes that for Kosovo to become a truly multi-ethnic and democratic society, all ethnic groups must be represented in all spheres of political life, including in future status talks. We therefore urge the Kosovo Serbs to fully cooperate and to participate not only in these talks but also in other Provisional Institutions. We share the Secretary-General's view that the leaders and the people of Kosovo also should increase their outreach efforts with respect to minority groups so as to promote confidence across ethnic lines and start engaging in reconciliation.

Madam President, let me thank you warmly for having reminded us that today is World Refugee Day. My delegation would like to express its solidarity with refugees and to commend all humanitarian organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for protecting, assisting and finding durable solutions to the problems of refugees the world over.

In that regard, we are concerned at the low number of refugees returning to Kosovo. We call for the creation of a conducive climate that will encourage refugees and internally displaced persons wishing to return to Kosovo to do so and that will ensure for them conditions of safety and dignity. Similarly, efforts should be geared towards improving the living conditions of, and providing opportunities for, the Serb community in Kosovo.

We are encouraged to note that regional integration has improved and that progress has been registered in the decentralization process despite the lack of participation by Kosovo Serbs. We are also pleased to note that the security situation has remained stable, albeit fragile. We commend UNMIK and KFOR for their even-handed determination to enhance security to support and shepherd the political process leading to a determination of Kosovo's future status.

We also welcome the efforts of UNMIK and other international partners in assisting Kosovo in the decentralization process and in other reforms, including in the police and the judiciary. We support UNMIK's restructuring to reflect the changing phases of Kosovo's political process and a possible international civilian presence in the future.

My delegation wishes to recognize the important role and contribution of all the different players in Kosovo, including United Nations agencies and the European Union.

I wish to express to Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen our profound gratitude and appreciation for his tenacious work in Kosovo, in one of the most challenging post-conflict situations in recent years. He has brought to the challenge tremendous humanitarian and political experience, which we believe will contribute positively to the future of Kosovo. We wish him all the best in his future engagements.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the constructive efforts that he is making in Kosovo and for his technical assessment and the

progress that has been achieved in connection with standards for Kosovo.

The situation of Kosovo depends on the effective participation of Albanian and Serb leaders in this process, as the region is at a critical juncture with respect to forging a better future for itself. All categories must participate in the dialogue in order to ensure its legitimacy and sustainability. The international community must support these efforts and this process.

The Kosovo of the future will be stable and prosperous only if it is based on a recognition of multi-ethnicity. For that reason, national reconciliation and the participation of all of the parties in the process is a crucial element to ensure a multi-ethnic Kosovo. As a result, the participation of non-Albanian minorities in all of the workings of the State and society remains pivotal. To that end, the Government must continue its efforts to ensure governmental participation of minorities. Belgrade must also facilitate their work in the context of those institutions. That would be reassuring for the inhabitants of Kosovo, who would be returning in a climate of security.

We would like to know what measures are being taken to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, and how financial support could improve the situation on the ground.

While the Special Representative has, in past assessments, pointed out the slow pace of standards implementation, his current assessment is more positive and indicates that a great deal of progress has been made in standards implementation during the period covered by the Secretary-General's report. We share his hope that the Provisional Institutions will sustain their current commitment, which will make it possible to accomplish even more in the months to come.

There is no doubt that the total commitment of the new Government and of the new Prime Minister, Mr. Çeku, to standards implementation, as well as the high priority given this process, will allow progress to be made in the implementation of the eight standards.

We commend the role that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in Kosovo is playing in supporting the Provisional Institutions, in the fight against crime and in adapting those structures so as to make them more competent and to promote a political settlement.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his report as well as Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen for his supplementary briefing. We wish to express our regret at Mr. Jessen-Petersen's upcoming resignation. Over the past two years, he has made an outstanding contribution to the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). China would like to express its appreciation for all his efforts.

We welcome also the presence of Ms. Sanda Rašković-Ivić, President of the Coordination Centre for the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, and the important statement she made.

In recent years, Kosovo and the Balkan region have undergone a series of political changes and are at a critical and historic juncture. China has always followed very closely the situation in the region, and we hope that the situation in Kosovo will remain stable and that new uncertainties will not arise in the Balkan region.

We have noted that, thanks to the concerted efforts of UNMIK and of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of standards. However, many challenges still remain in the economic, social and cultural fields and with respect to the problem of refugees.

The progress achieved in standards implementation will serve as a basis for the future status of Kosovo. It reflects the need to build a harmonious society in Kosovo in which all ethnic groups can coexist.

We welcome the will expressed by the Provisional Institutions and their leadership to implement the standards, and we hope that thoroughgoing efforts will be made and progress achieved. Members of the ethnic majority in Kosovo should assume primary responsibility for creating a social climate marked by security and tolerance; all others should cooperate with them in a positive manner.

The process to determine the status of Kosovo began last year. Since then, with the good offices and coordination of Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of

the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo, the authorities of Serbia and Kosovo have held many rounds of direct negotiations and have reached some consensus. China welcomes the continuation of such dialogue, which can help enhance mutual understanding and the search for common ground and can move the question of Kosovo onto a positive track. China supports all efforts to find a sustainable solution acceptable to both parties, through peaceful negotiations. The question of Kosovo is rife with very specific characteristics and complexities, and the international community should demonstrate great resolve and patience with respect to its resolution.

China has always respected the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries in the Balkan region. We have consistently held that an appropriate comprehensive resolution of the question of Kosovo should be based on the provisions of Security Council resolutions and that all the standards should be implemented. Both parties should be encouraged and assisted to reach compromise through a process of consultation. In a sincere and pragmatic spirit, all the parties concerned should promote the political process in Kosovo. Only with the attainment of economic development, social stability and ethnic harmony in Kosovo can the question of Kosovo be resolved satisfactorily.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I should like to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for all the work he has done over the past two years of his service as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We thank him also for his comprehensive briefing today.

We welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

We also welcome the presence of the UNMIK delegation, with Kosovo's Prime Minister, Agim Çeku.

Greece associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

Three months on from the previous report of the Secretary-General to the Council, we are pleased to note that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, especially under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, have taken careful note of criticism with respect to progress in standards implementation and have responded with renewed efforts. Progress in the implementation of certain standards is now clearly discernible, as the Secretary-General concludes. We believe that the Provisional Institutions have fully realized the inescapable link between progress on standards implementation and progress in the political process to determine Kosovo's future. Functioning democratic institutions are continuously improving and growing stronger. Legislative measures are being adopted, and all the right structures across the board of a new civil service are being created. Further transfer of competencies in the area of rule of law has been implemented successfully.

Important legislative and other measures, however, still remain to be adopted. These should not be treated as secondary details to be dealt with at some later point. They are reflected in the 13 priorities that the Contact Group identified and communicated to the Provisional Institutions recently. They include, to name but a few: the adoption of laws on languages, cultural heritage and religious freedom; completing reconstruction and the provision of compensation with regard to properties damaged as a result of the March 2004 riots; adopting a public transportation strategy for minorities; and establishing an independent media commission.

Additional positive developments that are worth noting are the recent signature between Pristina and Belgrade of the Protocol on Returns and the progress reported in the preservation of cultural and religious heritage, and especially in the programme of reconstruction of church property damaged during the March 2004 violence.

At this point, though, what is sorely needed — but is only just limping along — is sustainable progress on substance that would give flesh and meaning to all those reforms. Also needed is progress that would translate a decision or measure taken in Pristina into fact and reality in Prizren, Gnjilane and Strpce, for example. Surely, complete progress in building a functioning democratic system cannot be considered to have been achieved so long as a part of the society that the system is supposed to represent refuses to participate. We cannot stress enough the value, above

all to themselves, of the Kosovo Serbs rejoining the Provisional Institutions and engaging in them.

Surely also, progress in reconciliation and in promoting the new democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo will be impossible as long as the prevailing atmosphere for minorities is one of insecurity and severely restrained freedom of movement. The increase in security-related and violent incidents over the past month, especially in the north and with victims coming mainly from the Serb minority, is real and should not be ignored or downplayed. Some of the violent attacks that have occurred may not be ethnically motivated. It is therefore all the more essential that the facts be established and that people be given all the extra reassurance they need that their concerns and fears are being taken seriously into consideration and are being dealt with effectively.

As talks on political progress for the future status are under way, security on the ground — perceived, felt, monitored and achieved — acquires greater importance and should become an absolute priority for both the international presence in Kosovo and the Provisional Institutions.

As all of us here are aware, we cannot look at the picture on the ground in Kosovo independently of what is happening in Vienna in the political process for determining future status. Talks in Vienna have so far touched upon all the basic aspects of the relationship between the Kosovo Albanian and Serb sides, but progress has been limited. It is positive that, at least, the positions of the two parties have been set down clearly and that common concerns or points of eventual agreement have been identified. We continue to believe that further progress on standards — along, of course, with the necessary political will — is one of the main factors that can provide the necessary impetus for closing the gap between the positions of the two sides.

But we also think it opportune at this juncture to come back to the starting point and remind everyone of the basic rules of this exercise, as contained in the Contact Group guiding principles, which were endorsed by the Security Council last November: the settlement of status should be fully compatible with international standards of human rights, democracy and international law; the settlement of status must ensure multi-ethnicity that is sustainable; the settlement of status must strengthen regional security and stability; and there shall be no changes in the current territory of Kosovo.

Those principles constitute a right that can be claimed and an obligation that should be respected for both the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs. In the coming months, as the political process in Vienna gathers speed, the efforts by the Provisional Institutions must keep pace and deliver further results. Such results will stand as the only proof that Kosovo is ready to move forward.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's Security Council meeting of the President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, Her Excellency Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, and of the Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, and his delegation.

We take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/361) and of his Special Representative's briefing on the situation in Kosovo, Republic of Serbia. We also take note of the work of Mr. Jessen-Petersen as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) during the past two years. However, we are obliged to note that the most recent report shows signs of rewriting Kosovo's reality. We must also note that, despite certain favourable trends and the promises made by the leaders of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo, the implementation of standards in Kosovo still cannot be called satisfactory. Some of the positive peripheral developments in Kosovo — for example, the functioning of local governance — do not compensate for the continuing failure to implement standards in the region as a whole.

We associate ourselves with the Secretary-General's appeal to the leaders of the province to urgently address those problems while giving primary attention to priority areas, especially those of vital importance to national minorities. The Contact Group, along with UNMIK, transmitted to the leadership of the Provisional Institutions a list of crucial steps in that regard. Progress in those areas will be an important indicator of the readiness of Kosovo's leadership to establish the foundations for a multi-ethnic democratic society in which the members of all communities can live in decent and safe conditions. We hasten to add

that the tasks set out in that list constitute only a small part of what must ultimately be done. We count on close monitoring by the Contact Group as regards the implementation of standards by leaders of the province.

At the moment it is premature to say that the requisite guarantees of the rights, safety and freedom of movement of members of minority groups, especially Serbs, exist. The problems associated with decentralization and protecting the religious and cultural heritage of minorities are also far from being solved. The situation urgently requires greater efforts on this track by UNMIK, the representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other European organizations. We would also welcome more energetic efforts in this area by the Council of Europe.

In the area of maintaining law and order, and specifically with regard to the progress made in investigating the anti-Serb pogroms of March 2004, we note that to date not a single network behind the pogroms has been eliminated. Of the houses destroyed two years ago, only slightly more than half have been rebuilt.

We are particularly concerned that, according to available information, between 24 October 2005 and 31 May 2006 there were a total of 187 attacks on members of the non-Albanian population of Kosovo. Fifteen of those cases involved firearms, and 11 included explosive devices. There were also 16 cases of arson, while 27 passers-by in cars had stones thrown at them. As a result of that, one person died and 21 were injured, 25 buildings were burned or damaged, four religious buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged, and 18 graves were desecrated. The list of the damage goes on. The troubles in that area are also evidenced in a series of incidents in northern Mitrovica, were victims are unfailingly Kosovo Serbs. Flagrant crimes against the Serb national minority are not fully investigated, and criminals go unpunished. To doubt that the vast majority of these crimes are ethnically motivated is to fly in the face of common sense.

The facts point to the urgency of the need for more effective international pressure on extremists in Kosovo. The international community must not give in to outrageous blackmail from extremists, whereby the wave of violence will continue if the province does not receive independence by the end of the year. Claiming political maturity, the authorities in Pristina, as well as UNMIK, must effectively put an end to such threats and, even more so, to such acts.

The sorriest state of affairs concerns freedom of movement. A prime example of that is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Serb enclave of Gracanica, near Pristina, have never been to the provincial centre. In other words, those people are living in total isolation due to fear and the lack of sufficient security on the roads.

We welcome the meeting between Mr. Sejdiu, President of Kosovo, and Bishop Teodosije, head of the monastery at Visoki Dečani. That should provide impetus to making progress in this area.

Nevertheless, the situation concerning the return of refugees and the rights of communities continues to be unsatisfactory, as the figures contained in the report confirm. That does not take into account those who registered their return, sold their property and once again left Kosovo. In order to rectify the situation we need not only political statements but also concrete efforts, including financial measures to improve living conditions on the ground and eliminate obstacles to the process of return.

We note in particular the role played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Council of Europe in restoring Serbian Orthodox Church buildings in Kosovo. We count on continued attentive monitoring by those two international organizations. We share the Secretary-General's concern about the continuing acts of vandalism against religious shrines. Any incident of that nature requires firm condemnation, above all by the political leaders of the province.

The non-participation of Kosovo Serbs in the activities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government proves that Kosovo is still far from resolving the main task of creating a multi-ethnic and democratic society. The level of trust of minorities in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo is still low. Moreover, non-Albanian communities have misgivings about the lack of democracy and systems to include minorities, as well as about the existing mechanism to monitor local implementation of decisions in the interest of all, rather than of a single community. A significant number of non-Albanians still have the impression that their

participation in the Provisional Institutions is more decorative than anything else. They feel that there is no real involvement in the decision-making process. The majority community must create a climate that encourages minorities, and Kosovo Serbs in particular, to cooperate with provincial authorities and take part in all spheres of life in Kosovo. In that regard, we believe that the attempts to shift to Belgrade the blame for the non-participation of Kosovo Serbs in the activities of the Provisional Institutions are wrong. Nor should Belgrade be blamed for the unsatisfactory situation vis-à-vis the standards.

We urgently call on provincial leaders to intensify their efforts to ensure real and stable progress in the implementation of standards, especially as regards those that are of priority to national minorities.

Given the defining significance of the standards for Kosovo's future, we categorically oppose attempts to defer their implementation to the post-status period. We view as unacceptable statements regarding predetermination of the question of the region's independence before the end of the year. We also oppose the notion, heard here and there, of "status, if it works, before standards". Arguments that the independence of the province would somehow make it possible for Pristina to implement standards more effectively are absolutely unfounded.

Achieving specific and effective progress on standards is one of the determining factors influencing the pace and success of the negotiating process that will determine the future status of Kosovo. We are convinced that only a qualitative correction of the situation regarding standards will serve to lay the foundation for productive progress in their implementation through the mediation of Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to find a negotiated compromise between Belgrade and Pristina. We note that the task of the international mediators should be precisely that of mediation and should not be an imposition of their own ideas, particularly if they coincide with those of only one side.

It is already clear that, even in the optimal outcome, lasting and genuine results in standardization can be assured only in the long term. Quite some time will also be required for the parties to reach an outcome in status negotiations. In that regard, we see no need for the status issue to be artificially hastened. We feel in that respect that it would be counterproductive to establish any kind of arbitrarily stringent timeframe. We base that assessment on the multiple potential versions of the status option. Parties to the direct negotiations must themselves identify, without outside pressure, a negotiated decision on the future status of Kosovo that satisfies both Belgrade and Pristina.

In that connection, it is of primary importance that, in the context of the forthcoming negotiating rounds, the Belgrade status platform be constructively considered alongside other proposals. The success of the collective efforts of the international community on Kosovo will depend on the consistent observance of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and of the guiding principles laid out by the Contact Group, as well as on ongoing and comprehensive monitoring by the Security Council of standards implementation in the province and the evolution of the negotiating process as the parties seek a mutually acceptable status solution.

A decision on the future status of the province must, in all circumstances, be comprehensive. The formula for resolving the problems of Kosovo – which are far from unique, by the way – will objectively have an impact on the development of situations in other conflicts. The Security Council must therefore support only negotiations, and not one-sided, unilateral or imposed solutions, for only negotiations will not set a negative precedent in the context of international crisis resolution.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): At the outset, allow me to join my colleagues in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for his entire contribution to the peace process in Kosovo and for his briefing today. We believe that, at this critical stage for the international presence in Kosovo, we can hope for a new appointment soon.

Our appreciation extends to all the members of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) team for their commitment and daily work.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like to welcome Ms. Rašković-Ivić, President of the Coordinating Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, and the presence of the Prime

Minister of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, Mr. Çeku, at this meeting.

The region of the western Balkans remains a natural priority of Slovak foreign policy for many reasons. Our involvement there is based on the principles of transparency and impartiality, aimed at strengthening the stability of the region and at supporting the democratization and integration process.

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered later this morning by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. That is why I will limit my statement to the following points.

First of all, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his evaluation of the situation in Kosovo, contained in his report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We continue to believe that the role of UNMIK, as a consequence of the Security Council's decision to launch negotiations in order to define the future status of Kosovo, has become even more vital and instrumental to the peace, stability and prosperity of the region and to a lasting settlement of Kosovo's future status.

That is why we think that the current UNMIK report does not fully reflect the context in which it is presented. We had hoped for certain elaborations that would help us to facilitate our assessment of the ongoing political process, under the auspices of the United Nations. We deem the report to be unsatisfactory with respect to the following areas: Kosovo's institutions' ability to meet the challenges of democratization and the rule of law, with an emphasis on the issue of international organized crime, which threatens more than just Kosovo and its closest neighbours; the prospects for Kosovo's economic and political sustainability; its prognosis for multi-ethnic coexistence, which is directly proportionate to such issues as the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; and, last but not least, the question of whether Kosovo's ultimate status will contribute to the stability of the region.

Those critical issues for the determination of Kosovo's future status should be taken into consideration, and we look forward to receiving the forthcoming report of Mr. Ahtisaari, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo.

Secondly, we note with some satisfaction the section of the Secretary-General's report in which he elaborates positively on general trends among Kosovo's new leadership on the ongoing issue of standards implementation. We commend the personal role and dedication of Prime Minister Çeku in that regard, which is also praised in the report.

However, in the context of the talks on future status, we think it critical objectively to evaluate whether the overall results in that regard are sufficient for further progress on the issue of future status, and vice-versa. The report's lack of directness in that regard, and the fact that the Contact Group has decided to redefine and narrow key standards, are indicators that the situation in this area cannot be considered to be as positive as it is presented. We therefore believe that the 13 priorities of standards implementation considered by the Contact Group deserve special support and a thorough overview by the Security Council, as well as by other entities.

Thirdly, in our view the participation of the Kosovo Serbs in the future status process, as well as their engagement in Kosovo's political life, are of cardinal importance. We therefore call on Belgrade to encourage the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the process and in the political life of Kosovo in order to influence the process, which will be decisive to the province's future. We also call on Belgrade and Pristina to allow Kosovo Serbs to exercise their rights in a way that will contribute to creating a positive atmosphere in the negotiating process and to the stabilization of the region.

However, we do not share the view that the official target of 16.6 per cent minority participation at the central level of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government is in the best interests of the international community in Kosovo, as set down in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). In our opinion, the current proportional key is not a good mobilization tool for minority participation in the central Government. The ongoing existence of parallel structures, as also mentioned in the report, is proof that minorities still do not trust the central Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

It is our firm belief that the determination of Kosovo's future status is an extremely sensitive issue. It is already almost inevitable that its consequences will be felt beyond the region's borders. The starting

points in the Kosovo issue are linked to the situation as it was set up after the Second World War and intermingled with the ethnic and religious complexities of the region, which have endured for centuries. Those are the elements that make the Kosovo case sui generis and extraordinary.

While it may be problematic today to impose a desired solution on the international framework of conflict settlement, there are still many alternatives that could be explored. The potential failure of an incorrect solution could call into question the existing tools for conflict settlement that have been in use for decades. We therefore wish to repeat that we believe it necessary to find a lasting and balanced settlement of the future status of Kosovo. At the same time, as is also highlighted in the Contact Group's guiding principles for a settlement of Kosovo's status,

> "the settlement of the Kosovo issue should be fully compatible with international standards of human rights, democracy and international law and contribute to regional security".

We continue to believe that it is important to seek a negotiated settlement and compromise from both Belgrade and Pristina through direct talks and dialogue. Only such a solution, reflecting the objective concerns of all parties concerned and not considered to have been imposed from the outside, will contribute to the lasting security and stability of the region. In that context, we also believe that all options for the outcome of status talks should remain open. In the expectation of success in the status talks, we think it more than important that all participants in the talks refrain from any activities that could give Belgrade or Pristina the impression that the outcome of the final status talks has been prejudged.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure you that Slovakia, being a troop-contributing country to KFOR, is ready to continue its dedication to the peace, stabilization and integration process in the Balkans.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for his presentation of the report on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) during the first months of the year. With the announcement of his upcoming retirement from that post, my delegation wishes to express our gratitude for the dedication and effort that the Special Representative has shown as the head of UNMIK for almost two years. We wish him almost every success in his future endeavours.

We also wish to express our gratitude for the briefing given us this morning by Ms. Sanda Raškovič-Ivič, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

The political process intended to determine the future status of Kosovo has made progress in the initial months of application. Even though it is premature to call for substantial agreements, we are encouraged by the active participation of both parties in those conversations, and by the progress in the conversations. We hope that as a result of this willingness we will soon begin to see initial understandings. My delegation reiterates its support for that political progress designed to find a negotiated solution. We also support the approach adopted by the Special Envoy to begin direct conversations between the parties on practical issues and to gradually move towards a future status.

But as we have said earlier, in the search for a future status for Kosovo it is important not to delay the implementation of standards. Indeed, important progress in the attainment of standards is a crucial condition in order to make progress in the political process.

Whatever territorial entity may emerge in Kosovo, it is important that it be a democratic entity, where there is respect for civil freedoms, where there is political and religious tolerance, where there is respect for minorities, where there are economic opportunities for all, and where power is transferred periodically in a democratic fashion. The implementation of standards is fundamental in order to establish an entity of that nature and thus to help in the attainment of a European vision for that region.

We are pleased to note the renewed commitment with which the new leaders in Kosovo have proposed to carry out the pending tasks in the implementation of standards. Even though we understand that there are major areas in which significant progress is yet to be firmed up, the actions that have been undertaken and that are set out in the report do make us hopeful about short-term results. However, we must reiterate that all the parties concerned must join and cooperate in that process, which is decisive for their own future. The building of a multi-ethnic and democratic society

requires the active participation of all parties involved in order to build a consensus that would make it possible to lay the foundations for a lasting solution to the question of Kosovo.

In the implementation of standards, a priority is reconciliation and the promotion of the return of displaced persons, as well as full respect for the diversity of the population. We welcome the recent signing of the protocol, on 6 June, by representatives of Serbia and of the Kosovo region to speed up the return of displaced persons. The signing of that instrument reflects the political will of the parties to deal with the problem, which is crucial. Direct conversations on the return of the displaced persons, which have begun and which will continue at the expert level, should be encouraged by the international community with a view to producing concrete facts, which would create a new, positive environment in the treatment of the question of Kosovo.

One aspect that my delegation considers central in standards implementation is progress in building a viable economy in Kosovo, one with enough productive capacity to ensure economic sustainability and future democracy in Kosovo. A viable economy is still quite remote in Kosovo, and thus there are doubts that a future multi-ethnic democracy can be sustainable in a country with such extreme poverty. We hope that the economic actions presented in the report to modernize the economy will in the short term generate jobs and opportunities so that the local population can become part of the economy and in that way help fight the disturbing crime and international illegal activities in Kosovo.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset I should like to thank Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his briefing and for his steady commitment to the stabilization and development of Kosovo, as demonstrated by the considerable progress that we have seen today. I wish to join my voice to all those who today have paid a well-deserved tribute to him as he is about to leave his post.

I am pleased to welcome here Ms. Rašković-Ivić, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, and, in Mr. Jessen-Petersen's delegation, Mr. Çeku, Prime Minister of Kosovo.

The representative of Austria will make a statement as President of the European Union, with which I associate myself fully. I will make a few remarks of my own.

First, I wish to stress the fresh impetus given by the authorities of Kosovo — particularly by the new Prime Minister, Mr. Çeku — to implement the standards concretely and swiftly. Tangible progress has been made in accordance with the demands by the members of the Council. Dialogue with minorities, beginning with the Serbian minorities, is encouraging. We fully share the positive evaluation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in this respect.

The Kosovo authorities must continue to make determined progress along that path. Many concrete measures remain to be adopted — and swiftly — particularly as regards the 13 priorities identified by UNMIK and the Contact Group relating to the protection of minorities and the rule of law. Progress in that respect will be an essential criterion when the time comes to determine the status of Kosovo.

No lasting stabilization will be possible without the reconciliation of the communities. The violence directed at minorities referred to in the report of the Secretary-General shows that such reconciliation is still a long way away. The transfer to the Provisional Institutions of competencies in the areas of justice and the police should lead to the creation of an impartial administration capable of combating such violence. But that necessary reconciliation will require the Kosovo Serbs to agree to participating in the Provisional Institutions — which is in their own interests — as the authorities in Kosovo have invited them to do. In this respect, we share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General regarding the pressure on Kosovo's Serbs to discourage them from doing that. The Belgrade authorities must encourage such participation, not hold it back.

The evolution of the situation on the ground is linked to the development of the political process regarding future status. Direct dialogue under the auspices of Mr. Ahtisaari has intensified, thanks to the active participation of both parties. The Kosovo negotiating team has made constructive proposals in terms of decentralization. Despite the difference in positions, it seems that it would be possible to find common ground on certain concrete questions, and in that area in particular. As the report of the Secretary-General stresses, the parties must display flexibility and a spirit of compromise.

Lastly, the international community must remain present one way or another in Kosovo, both to ensure the implementation of future status and to guarantee the stability of the entire region. That presence should no longer be through UNMIK, because we feel that its mandate will be concluded once status has been defined. The European Union will have a role to play, particularly in terms of justice and the police, and France is ready to make its contribution and to play its part.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I, too, would like to welcome Prime Minister Çeku here today, for the first time since his appointment. I also welcome Ms. Raskovic-Ivic and thank her for her statement.

The United Kingdom associates itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom would like to express its gratitude to the Special Representative, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for the absolutely outstanding work that he has done for two years in Kosovo. He has transformed and reinvigorated the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and has worked relentlessly with the Provisional Institutions to ensure genuine progress on standards and minority rights. The fact that Kosovo was in a position last autumn for the status process to begin is due, in no small part, to his efforts. His and his team's tireless commitment, energy and perseverance do them — and, as a consequence, the United Nations — enormous credit. We thank his family, too, for the support that they have given him as he has carried out his vital task. The United Kingdom would like to wish him every future success.

His successor will have a hard act to follow. The United Kingdom looks forward to having a productive working relationship with him or her, as UNMIK continues to reform and Kosovo learns difficult lessons about accountability and responsibility. More hard work will be needed, especially to continue Søren Jessen-Peterson's good work in reaching out to minority communities to help create an environment in which all communities can coexist in stability and prosperity.

I would like to make four brief points on priorities for the coming months.

First, the Secretary-General's report makes clear that substantial progress has been made on standards implementation and outreach to minority communities. That is welcome, but it must be sustained. Further progress is needed across the board, for example in minority rights legislation and the reconstruction of damaged and destroyed property. We look forward to some important steps in that regard being taken by the Assembly in the coming weeks.

The international community and the Council remain focused on monitoring concrete results, as shown by the Contact Group letter to Pristina of 9 June, which specifies — as the representative of France mentioned — 13 priority areas with set time boundaries for progress.

I would like to strongly echo what the representative of Peru said, that the future of Kosovo is as a functioning democracy and economy. I also endorse what he said about the European vision. Of course, we want that European future to apply to Serbia, too.

Secondly, the Kosovo Government's efforts to reach out to minorities have been impressive. The inter-faith conference hosted by the Serb Orthodox Church, and President Sejdiu's visit to Kosovo Serb areas, are very positive signals. Such initiatives, however, can make meaningful progress only if they are reciprocated. It is hard to see how Belgrade's persistence in actively discouraging Kosovo Serbs from joining Kosovo's institutions or political life serves their interests. It does not serve the interests of the Kosovo Serbs. The future of the Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo is as active participants and contributors, not as an insular and disenfranchised community.

Thirdly, the Contact Group's letter to Belgrade of 9 June called on the Serbian leadership to stop obstructing processes that can only improve the lives of Kosovo Serbs. Belgrade's active and constructive engagement in the Kosovo status process is the best way to preserve, protect and promote the interests of Kosovo's Serbian community. But it is also a vital part of Belgrade's own rapprochement with the rest of Europe, so that it can take its rightful place there.

I welcome what Ms. Raskovic-Ivic said about the importance of Kosovo Serb participation in the political life of Kosovo. That is very welcome, but I encourage Belgrade not to make it conditional on agreement to decentralization. Decentralization is an

important part of Kosovo's future. Talks are under way in Vienna, and they deserve our support. But Kosovo Serb participation is needed now, without preconditions.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the United Kingdom continues to support, unreservedly, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Kosovo's future, Martti Ahtisaari. I will reserve our comments on status until his presentation later this summer. But I would like to respond to a couple of points that have been made today, including one point from Mrs. Raskovic-Ivic about international order and legality.

The United Kingdom recalls the Contact Group ministerial statement of 31 January, which was supported by the United Nations, the European Union and NATO. The solution to status must be acceptable to the people of Kosovo. There is a sound basis for that in the United Nations Charter.

I would also like to echo what the representative of China said about the great specificities and complexities of the Kosovo situation. It is true that the day-to-day problems of Kosovo, particularly in the economy, are not unique to that place. But Kosovo is uniquely placed in the panoply of post-conflict situations by virtue of the events of 1998 and 1999, resolution 1244 (1999) and the existence of the status process, led by Martti Ahtisaari. The resolution of status will enhance regional stability, not detract from it.

The United Kingdom is serious about the commitments the Contact Group expressed in its guiding principles and the 31 January statement. We are working intensively towards a settlement during 2006. The international community cannot allow the future status process to be delayed.

Mr. Brencick (United States of America): We, together with other members, welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jessen Petersen, back to the Council and thank him for his encouraging report on progress in Kosovo. He has done an outstanding and exemplary job in his position in the leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We regret his departure on 30 June, but wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

We welcome the progress that the Special Representative has documented in Kosovo. In particular, the United States congratulates Kosovo's President Sejdiu and Prime Minister Çeku on for their bold calls for ethnic reconciliation and for actions taken to improve the lives of Kosovo's minority communities.

We recognize, however, that more work needs to be done, particularly in the short term, to build confidence among Kosovo's minorities. This is critical while negotiations on Kosovo's future status are under way. Symbolic overtures are important, but we also need to see more results on the ground. Kosovo's leaders must continue to demonstrate, through their actions, a commitment to reconciliation and an ability to govern effectively. The first steps are encouraging, but the Kosovo Government needs to maintain this momentum.

We welcome the decline in potential ethnically-motivated crimes, as reported recently by UNMIK. We urge leaders of all groups to condemn all violence and to vigorously prosecute acts perpetrated against ethnic minorities. We also urge leaders to refrain from alleging ethnic motives for crimes until facts are known.

We note that Belgrade has important responsibilities to help improve the situation in Kosovo as well. In particular, Belgrade can cease obstructing Kosovo Serbs from participating in Kosovo's institutions. Participating in those institutions will allow Kosovo Serbs to advocate their own interests most effectively.

The implementation of standards must continue after Kosovo's status is determined. Full implementation of the standards will be an important part of Kosovo's long-term democratic development and of its future integration into Europe. We continue to support Martti Ahtisaari, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, leading the Kosovo status process. We look forward to his consultations with the Security Council this summer.

The United States calls on both sides to engage seriously and constructively with Mr. Ahtisaari, particularly on the issues most critical to Kosovo's long-term stability, such as decentralization and the rights of minorities. We urge both sides to be realistic about the outcome of the status process. I would only repeat what the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General, Søren Jessen-Petersen, just said: there will be no return to the Kosovo of the pre-1999 situation, no partition of Kosovo and no union of Kosovo with any other — or part of any other — country. Kosovo must remain multi-ethnic, and a settlement must be acceptable to the people of Kosovo.

Finally, all possible efforts must, in our view, be made to achieve a negotiated settlement in the course of 2006. Further delay would prolong instability, as just noted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I, too, should like to thank Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his presentation. His briefing, which provided the Council with useful details, and the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/361) give us a clear picture of the situation in Kosovo — a situation that recent events have made even more disturbing.

Indeed, we are concerned by certain unilateral statements and initiatives that could threaten to destabilize the situation on the ground. We refer in particular to the recent demonstrations against the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which only serve to heighten needless tension at a time when the international community is calling for more responsibility, particularly to give every chance to the political process, which has just begun, to determine Kosovo's future status.

Permit me to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, who is preparing to leave UNMIK, for his far-sighted activities during the past few years in a particularly difficult environment. During his mandate, he was able to carry out and consolidate activities to combat crime and to promote economic recovery and the building of a multi-ethnic society. The Secretary-General's periodic report clearly indicates the favourable developments noted in recent months as a result of those activities.

Thanks to the impetus provided by UNMIK, many initiatives have been undertaken to enable members of the Serb community and other minorities to feel that they belong in Kosovo and are living in peace and security. We must build on those results for the long term.

During this period, UNMIK satisfactorily transferred competencies to the provisional authorities — represented here today by Prime Minister Çeku — in various areas such as respect for the rule of law, the police and justice, while retaining general jurisdiction on those issues. This is now enabling the Pristina authorities to carry out daily administration of their own affairs. We are pleased to note that the recent political changes have not altered such cooperation, which is being demonstrated at all levels, including the local level. The commitment of the new authorities to continue investigating the crimes committed in March 2004 is an encouraging sign for the affirmation of justice and the fight against impunity.

However, those positive developments must be built upon, because they remain limited. Although the Secretary-General highlights some areas of progress, we must note that, since the Security Council's last meeting on Kosovo (see S/PV.5373), there has been much work to do in the areas of deepening democracy and building the rule of law and respect for the rights of minorities, which remain among UNMIK's top priorities.

In that regard, we note several sources of concern. The implementation of the standards must be a prerequisite for Kosovo's future development. We must note that, whether it be dialogue with Belgrade, Serb participation in the political process and in the Provisional Institutions, economic development, the strengthening of security or the return of refugees and displaced persons, there have been too few results so far. That could compromise the attainment of the Contact Group's objective of concluding the political negotiations during 2006.

Only reconciliation and confidence among the various communities can attain what must remain the international community's objective: building a modern, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo in keeping with the standards established by UNMIK and in everyone's interests. Thus, we look forward to the briefing to be made by Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, on the developments in the political process. Of course, we wish him every success.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): While the talks on the future status of Kosovo are drawing much of the international community's attention, the issue of

standards implementation also needs to be closely monitored by the Security Council. We thank Mr. Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing. Japan appreciates the initiatives undertaken by Mr. Jessen-Petersen and by Prime Minister Çeku of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to promote standards implementation. We welcome the presence of the delegation of the Provisional Institutions, led by Prime Minister Çeku, in this Chamber today. I also thank Ms. Raskovic-Ivic, representative of the Republic of Serbia, for her detailed statement.

Japan sent an expert-level mission to Kosovo in March, followed by the dispatch in May of Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamanaka to the region in order to be apprised of the political, social and humanitarian situation on the ground — including the progress being made in the standards implementation plan — and to reaffirm to the authorities of the Provisional Institutions the importance we attach to standards implementation.

We are encouraged by the good progress being made in this regard, as the Secretary-General has noted in his latest report. We appreciate in particular the important initiatives taken by President Sejdiu and Prime Minister Çeku to visit and talk with municipalities and minority communities, as concrete attempts at confidence-building among communities. The standards implementation plan itself has already been elaborated, with detailed assessments of the needs of minority communities. They need to be acted upon, and we ask the leadership of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to continue those outreach activities to minority communities so that they can grasp their real needs.

We also appreciate the initiative of the Contact Group aimed at identifying 13 key areas for standards implementation. This will not only be useful to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in policy planning and implementation but could also lead to further desirable developments through closer interaction among the Provisional Institutions, the Contact Group and the international community, as stated in the letter from Prime Minister Çeku to the Secretary-General dated June 16.

These signs of progress notwithstanding, we are concerned that there is a lack of progress in promoting the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the political process in Kosovo. We wish to reiterate that non-participation, and encouragement of non-participation by whomsoever, is to be avoided, since it would not be conducive to a positive outcome.

Likewise, we are concerned that not much has been achieved in the area of freedom of movement and that there has not been any significant number of internally displaced persons and refugees returned to Kosovo. It is our expectation that KFOR and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) will continue to work to improve the security situation.

With respect to the issue of future status, the Government of Japan extends its full support to the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Ahtisaari. We look forward to substantive discussions on this issue in the Council when he visits the United Nations next month.

Last but not least, we commend the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the other international players deployed in Kosovo for their contributions. In particular, as Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen has indicated his intention to resign soon, the Japanese delegation expresses its deep appreciation to him for the outstanding contributions he has made over the years in leading UNMIK and as a humanitarian. We would like to express our hope that the spirit of unity with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government that he has engendered in working towards the standards implementation will be fully embraced by his successor. We wish Mr. Jessen-Petersen every success in future.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Prime Minister of Kosovo and of the President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

On this occasion — World Refugee Day — my delegation joins other States Member of the United Nations in expressing solidarity with all refugees, displaced persons and victims of war, natural and man-made disasters.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his comprehensive briefing and to congratulate him for his exemplary work as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We

take this opportunity to wish him success in his future endeavours.

We are greatly encouraged by the fact that the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina are engaged in direct and sustained negotiations on a broad range of issues, including on power structures, issues related to cultural and religious heritage, as well as the economy. All these affect the vital interests of the various population groups, and we eagerly await the outcome of the negotiations. Hopefully, it will be a win-win situation for all.

My delegation remains convinced that the path to social harmony and lasting peace in Kosovo must be based on a deliberate policy of inclusiveness and respect for the rights of all ethnic groups. The importance of the principles embodied in the standards cannot be overstated. They constitute the bedrock of a democratic, stable and prosperous Kosovo, and we are pleased with the determined efforts by the leadership of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo to meet the benchmarks. Whatever the outcome of the final status negotiations, the vision of a multicultural, tolerant, open and democratic Kosovo must not be compromised.

In that regard, we call on the Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic minorities to take full advantage of the guarantees enshrined in the standards in order to secure a meaningful role and greater well-being in the future Kosovo. While we acknowledge that the wounds of war will take time to heal, we believe that that should not blind any ethnic group to the realities of a shared destiny with others with whom they share longstanding historical ties. It is only by participating fully and meaningfully in the ongoing dialogue that each group can make its fears, interests and aspirations heard and understood by its counterparts.

In the meantime, my delegation wishes to commend the leadership of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government for the bold steps they have taken to reach out to the minority groups. We encourage them to keep knocking on the doors of the Kosovo Serbs in particular until they join in the process of forging a common destiny for all the people of Kosovo.

Undoubtedly, this must be a most challenging period for the authorities in Belgrade as well. We can only encourage them, in weighing their options, to be guided by the larger interests of peace and stability in the Balkans, without which the region's economic and political potential cannot be fully realized.

Finally, we join other delegations in appealing for additional assistance for the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to enable them to carry out their capacity- and confidence-building programmes.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to join other members who spoke before me in expressing our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, for the comprehensive report he has given us on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as well as on the developments that have taken place in the province. As Mr. Jessen-Petersen has recently announced that he will soon be leaving his post, we would like to commend him for his commitment to Kosovo and for the professionalism he has demonstrated in fulfilling his mandate.

We would also like to thank the President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, Ms. Sanda Rašković-Ivić, for her statement. We note also the presence of the Prime Minister of Kosovo in the Special Representative's delegation.

We understand that currently there are two processes in Kosovo which are running in parallel. On the one hand, the process to determine the future status of Kosovo has moved forward. Despite the violence that has taken place, it is encouraging to note that direct talks between the parties have shown that there is a certain level of convergence on some concrete issues, though substantial differences still persist. It should also be pointed out that it is the parties themselves that are responsible for ensuring progress in those talks, of which the outcome should be a mutually beneficial agreement. For the process to succeed, it is vital that the outcome — whatever it might be — should be the outcome of negotiations between the parties and not an international imposition.

We are pleased also to note the progress detailed in Mr. Jessen-Petersen's report with regard to the implementation of standards, which is evidence of the commitment of the political leaders and of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo to realizing the objectives set by the international community. We agree with the Special Representative that real progress regarding standards is a key factor in

setting the pace of the political process aimed at determining the future status of Kosovo. We would also underline the actions taken that have allowed for the revitalization of the implementation process, and we urge the Government of Kosovo to deploy vigorous efforts in the key areas identified in the report, including the incorporation of Kosovo Serbs in the Provisional Institutions; the promotion of confidence and reconciliation between both communities; and ensuring that due attention is given to the security situation and the rule of law, bringing to justice those who are responsible for acts of violence.

Argentina believes that there can be no prosperous or peaceful future for Kosovo without full respect for the diversity of its people. We think that it is necessary, and possible, to reach a sustainable solution for Kosovo with full implementation of the principle of territorial integrity. This political process must be fostered by real progress in the implementation of the eight standards. Standards implementation is also a requirement for realizing Kosovo's European perspective, and it must continue to be the core of the efforts during the process of status determination, and even after that process has been completed. We urge the Provisional Institutions to continue the vigorous implementation of the standards in order to fulfil the aim of laying the foundations of a multi-ethnic and democratic society in Kosovo, where all communities can live in dignity, security and democracy.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Denmark.

Like others, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/361) and Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing.

I would also like to thank Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo, for her statement.

I associate myself with the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

I recall the discussion in the Council on the UNMIK report (S/2006/45) in February this year (see S/PV.5373). The general assessment by Council members was that standards implementation had been too slow. Thus, the prevailing message was a call for Kosovo's political leaders to renew their efforts to improve the implementation of standards. We are pleased to note that efforts have indeed improved. Denmark would like to welcome the alertness and the political willingness to move forward shown by the new administration in Pristina. Denmark shares the assessment by the Secretary-General that the Provisional Institutions are indeed enhancing their efforts to implement the standards.

While we welcome the concrete steps taken by the Provisional Institutions, it is also clear that these do not automatically alter the situation on the ground. The leadership of the Provisional Institutions needs to keep up the commitment and ensure that political decisions trickle down, yielding improvement on the ground. Denmark agrees with the assessment by the Secretary-General that real reconciliation depends on the prevailing mindset of the majority population. Every effort has to be made to create confidence amongst Kosovo's groups, confidence that is sorely missing. That is essentially the main challenge ahead for the political leaders of Kosovo.

It is with some concern that we have received reports about Kosovo Serb representatives cutting off cooperation with the Provisional Institutions and urging public servants to withdraw from their positions. Encouragement of a spirit of non-cooperation is not in anyone's interest. It will only lead to isolation and forced decisions. We hope that Belgrade will encourage the Kosovo Serb leaders to participate constructively in the Provisional Institutions. We all wish for a sustainable solution to Kosovo's future. That will not be brought about by a spirit of non-cooperation and isolation. The primary beneficiaries of a sustainable status solution will be all Kosovans regardless of ethnic group, the population of the Republic of Serbia and indeed all the people of the Western Balkans. Therefore, cooperation and participation are in everyone's best interest.

My country views Kosovo as a key regional issue. Denmark steadfastly supports UNMIK, the UNMIK police and the Kosovo Force. We look forward to a more peaceful and prosperous future, which the peoples of the Western Balkans deserve. That will entail close regional cooperation between former foes and efforts towards the common integration of these truly European countries into the Euro-Atlantic

institutions where they rightfully belong. However, the Euro-Atlantic perspectives depend on implementation of standards and a sustainable solution to Kosovo's future status.

Let me conclude, still in my national capacity, by thanking Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen for his outstanding work in Kosovo and wishing him all the best in the future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the countries aligning themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by thanking Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing, and by reiterating the European Union's full support for his work. We would also like to warmly welcome the participation of Sanda Raskovic-Ivic, President of the Coordination Centre of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo. At the same time, we also warmly welcome the presence of the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Agim Çeku, in the delegation headed by Mr. Jessen-Petersen.

Two years ago, Mr. Jessen-Petersen took up leadership of the United Nations mission in Kosovo at a very difficult phase. He has since made a decisive contribution to the stabilization and development of Kosovo. We would like to pay tribute to him for his tireless efforts towards our common goal: a multi-ethnic Kosovo in which all inhabitants can live in peace and dignity.

The main task of Mr. Jessen-Petersen's successor will now be to continue that work while at the same time preparing the transition from the current United Nations administration to an international presence after the determination of the future status of Kosovo. The sustainable implementation of all standards by the Kosovo Institutions will be of crucial importance for the European future of Kosovo.

At the last meeting of the Security Council on Kosovo (see S/PV.5373), we urged Kosovo's Institutions to renew their efforts to ensure substantive, accelerated and sustainable progress in the implementation of the standards, especially in key areas such as returns, equal access to justice and the preservation of cultural heritage. Like the Secretary-General, the EU welcomes the renewed vigour in the implementation of standards and expects that concrete and demonstrable results will follow. Nonetheless, the EU remains disappointed with the low numbers of returns. To ensure tangible improvements in the conditions on the ground, not only political but also financial commitment at all levels is required. In this regard, both Pristina and Belgrade have a role to play; we welcome the recent signature of the Protocol on Returns on 6 June 2006.

The European Union underlines that real progress on implementing standards remains an essential factor in determining progress in the political process to determine Kosovo's future status. At the same time, accelerated implementation of standards should not be viewed merely as a goal in itself or only as a way to achieve a decision on the future status of Kosovo. Effective standards implementation, including dialogue and outreach to Kosovo's minority communities, leading to a sustainable democratic and multiethnic society, is also a prerequisite for the fulfilment of Kosovo's European perspective.

The Partnership for Kosovo, adopted by the European Union last December, incorporates the standards as requirements for Kosovo's long-term European perspective, thereby underscoring that their effective implementation must continue to be the primary focus of efforts by the Provisional Institutions throughout, and beyond, the status process.

The European Union shares the Secretary-General's assessment that increased outreach to all Kosovo communities, particularly the Serbian, by Kosovo's leaders is welcome. However, that process needs to go hand in hand with a change in attitudes within Kosovo. Indeed, all people in Kosovo have a responsibility and a role to play in implementing the standards. We therefore call upon the leaders and the population in Kosovo, but also upon Belgrade, to increase their efforts to engage in reconciliation and the promotion of confidence across communities. In doing so they must not tolerate any violence, and those responsible for committing acts of violence must be brought to justice. Such efforts should be acknowledged and not dismissed.

We also believe that it is equally essential that Kosovo Serbs rejoin the Provisional Institutions at all

levels and actively engage in them. We share the Secretary-General's concern about reports of pressure on Kosovo Serbs to withdraw from positions within the Provisional Institutions, and we call upon the authorities in Belgrade to encourage, rather than discourage, Kosovo Serb leaders to participate constructively in the Provisional Institutions. To do so would allow the Serb community to engage in shaping their political future within Kosovo and contribute to improvements in their living conditions. The EU encourages concrete steps in that regard. At the same time, leaders on all sides will have to prepare their populations for difficult compromises ahead.

The European Union has consistently attached particular importance to the establishment of a substantial dialogue between all Kosovo communities, as well as between Belgrade and Pristina. The EU strongly urges both Belgrade and Pristina to work towards a lasting Kosovo status agreement that promotes a multi-ethnic and democratic society and contributes to regional stability.

On 16 June, EU heads of State or Government reaffirmed their support for the ongoing talks about the future status of Kosovo being led by Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. In that regard, it should be noted that, at their meeting in Salzburg in March, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the European Union, the acceding States, the candidate States and the potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans reiterated that every effort should be made to engage in good faith in the status process in order to find realistic solutions.

The European Union has been at the side of Kosovo and its inhabitants throughout the post-conflict period and has provided a major part of international aid, economic access, political support and reform advice. It is clear that Kosovo will require an international presence to supervise compliance with the provisions of the status settlement to ensure, inter alia, security throughout Kosovo and the protection of minorities and to support the continued implementation of the standards. The EU heads of State or Government have just reaffirmed their full support for the agenda set out at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, and for the Stabilization and Association Process, which will remain the framework for the European course of the Western Balkan countries.

We fully support the Secretary-General's call to all parties to continue to engage so that the eventual transition following a political settlement will be smooth and orderly. Consequently, the European Union has established a planning team in order to ensure a smooth transition between selected UNMIK tasks and the possible EU crisis management operation in the field of the rule of law and other areas that might be identified in the context of the future status process.

In close consultation with key international actors, the European Union stands ready to assume its responsibilities and to enhance its role in Kosovo following a status determination, in particular in the areas of police, rule of law and the economy, with a view to assisting a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo in its efforts to realize its European perspective.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Mr. Neritani (Albania): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing. I would like to extend to him my delegation's special thanks and my Government's appreciation for his personal commitment in constantly pursuing the goal of a democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo. During these two years, in a difficult and challenging phase, he made a very tangible contribution to the stabilization and development of Kosovo. Having won the respect and appreciation of the international community — and, in particular, that of the people of Kosovo — we regret his resignation and wish him the very best in his future endeavours. His successor's continuation of his resolute work will find an active and serious partner in the Albanian Government.

We would like to warmly welcome the presence in the Security Council Chamber of Prime Minister Çeku of Kosovo. We commend him for his achievements in implementing standards and for his Government's realistic commitment to make the accelerated pace a sustainable and permanent one. We are convinced that the Prime Minister and his Government will continue to build a viable, multi-ethnic, democratic and stable Kosovo for all of its citizens and for the entire region.

We also welcome the presence of Ms. Sanda Raskovic-Ivic at the head of the Serbian delegation.

We have before us the Secretary General's report on the activities of UNMIK and the situation and developments in Kosovo from 1 January to 30 April 2006 (S/2006/361). Let me express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for that realistic and substantive document.

We are pleased with the report's overall assessment that significant progress and tangible achievements have been made in various important areas in that period. We note with satisfaction the existence of an improved and stable political and security situation in Kosovo. The election of the current leadership in Kosovo in accordance with democratic principles and in closer cooperation with representatives of the international community is a sign of the increased capacity and maturity of Kosovo institutions, which bodes well for the future.

The intention and determination of the new leadership to accelerate the implementation of standards and to create a more constructive relationship by reaching out to Serbs and other communities has been effectively translated into concrete actions. It is now possible to discern progress across the broad front of standards implementation. Many processes within the standards programme have been revitalized. Concrete and demonstrable results have been achieved on priority standards. A legitimate institutional framework, a checks and balances mechanism, and the effective engagement of Kosovo's President. Prime Minister and other governmental officials will be more effective if a measured, responsible and forward-looking approach is taken by other stakeholders of that society. Despite their origin, the obstacles created by some Kosovo Serbs do not contribute to establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society and State in Kosovo.

We welcome the renewed vigour and fresh achievements in the implementation of the standards, and we encourage Kosovo's Government and political leaders to continue to tackle energetically the challenges in standards implementation, with a particular focus on priority areas recently highlighted by the Contact Group. The systematic and accelerated implementation of the standards should continue to be an essential part of building a sustainable, democratic and multi-ethnic society and State firmly rooted in the European architecture. We are convinced that Prime Minister Çeku's Government will maintain the positive momentum it has created and, as he has personally vowed, will continue with the implementation of the standards as his most important responsibility throughout and beyond the status process.

To build a multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo, it is essential that all minority communities fully participate in Kosovo's Institutions in a spirit of cooperation and with recognition of their legitimacy. We encourage non-participating minorities, especially Kosovo Serbs, to respect, fully cooperate with and participate in the political process and in the Institutions to ensure that their needs are met. We again appeal to Kosovo Albanians to continue their good work while demanding responsibility and doing their utmost to respect the freedom and rights of minority communities. With a high degree of responsibility and accountability towards the present and the future, Albanians, Serbs and other minorities in Kosovo should look forward to their common future, strengthen their cooperation and leave behind their past.

Kosovo is going through a very important stage at present. Its status process continues to remain the driving force. We note with satisfaction that the process designed to determine Kosovo's status has moved forward during the reporting period. The Albanian Government welcomes the direct talks between Pristina and Belgrade in Vienna on the crucial matters of decentralization, economic issues and religious and cultural heritage. We encourage and urge both sides to further continue this dialogue in a constructive and realistic manner, despite currently existing differences.

The political process to determine Kosovo's final status has attracted great attention in and out of Kosovo. With regard to negotiations to move this process forward, Albania will continue to play an active and constructive role in closer cooperation with the international community's relevant institutions and representatives. We continue to hold the view that the status process should proceed steadily and swiftly, with a decisive solution before the end of 2006. The conclusion of this process within this year and the definition of the status will serve the stability and security of Kosovo and the whole region. Delay and uncertainty will serve no one's interest.

We reiterate our strong support for the Contact Group's Guiding Principles for the settlement of the status of Kosovo. We agree that there should be no changes in Kosovo's current territory and borders and

no partition of Kosovo or union with any other country or with part of any other country. We do support a realistic, stable and multi-ethnic solution of Kosovo's status, one which will respect the overwhelming and clear will of the people of Kosovo.

We stress our strong conviction that the most realistic, pragmatic and just solution of this status is independence, with the extension of a civil and security presence of the international community for a certain period of time. We mean an independence that will ensure the support and protection of the rights of Serbs and all other minorities and of their cultural and religious heritage. We support an independence that will achieve a society where all people in Kosovo can live in dignity and prosperity and free from fear. We are encouraged that the Kosovo institutions and leaders hold the same vision and are proving their commitment to such an outcome. We are confident that independence will not only generate and guarantee social and economic stability and security for Kosovo and the whole region, but will also help to establish a sustainable, multi-ethnic, democratic society there. It will pave the way for a clearer European perspective.

In conclusion, let me reassure this body that the Albanian Government will continue to play an active and constructive role in the region and on this particular matter. The international community and the negotiating team of Mr. Ahtisaari will have a reliable partner in Albania throughout the upcoming process and beyond.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Jessen-Petersen to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen: First of all, allow me to thank the Council for the many very generous comments on the work that we have conducted and are conducting in Kosovo. Although these words are addressed to me, I see them also as very much addressed to my staff and to our local and international partners in Kosovo. I am grateful to the Council.

I also want to reiterate my thanks to the Council for the constant support that I have been receiving over the last two years. Allow me also today to thank the Secretary-General for his trust and his support.

We have listened carefully to the many useful observations made today. I have taken notes, and I am sure that Prime Minister Seku has also taken careful notes. We welcome the words of support, but we also clearly agree — and I am sure that the Prime Minister does as well — that there is need for further action. Further action and results will be pursued. The Prime Minister has taken very seriously the 13 points conveyed by the Contact Group a couple of weeks ago. Action is already under way, and we expect to see the results in the course of this month, most of it before the end of next month. That does not detract from the importance of focusing on all the priority standards, and that work will also continue.

I listened with particular attention and interest to the statement by the representative of Serbia, Mrs. Raskovic-Ivic. I must confess that, having lived in Kosovo for two years — with my eyes and ears open most of the time, I believe — I did not recognize everything I heard. I certainly agree with Mrs. Raskovic-Ivic, and I just said it, that the situation remains very difficult for many of the minorities, Kosovo Serbs in particular. I do agree, and said in my opening remarks, that we need to focus on more progress in the living conditions of the Kosovo Serbs. Many of the statements here have once against urged Belgrade to allow the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the process.

Let me just mention four or five examples of statements with which I do not quite agree. We have heard that there has been little progress on property issues, when in fact 98 per cent — 98 per cent — of all private property cases, have been resolved. However — and this is where our focus will be — 10 per cent of those 98 per cent resolved cases are still pending in terms of enforcement, which is where action should be focused. Furthermore, a couple of months ago we did establish the Kosovo Property Agency. That new agency will be focusing on the very important work related to agricultural and commercial lands, which is of particular importance to the many Kosovo Serbs, including the returnees. In that connection, it would be extremely helpful if Belgrade could help us with returning the cadastral records. It would be difficult to make progress without them.

We heard a reference to a report on the so-called 187 incidents. Our UNMIK Directorate of Crime Analysis has, of course, analysed these reports, because we take all such reports seriously. Our preliminary finding is that some of the 187 cases were wrongly reported statistically. The number of cases in the document is actually 101, and not 187. Nine of those 101 can indeed be categorized as inter-ethnic.

Forty-two of the cases were never reported to the police nor to the judicial authorities. Thirty-five are categorized as having an unknown motive; investigations are still continuing. Ten cases were seen as crimes for personal gain, and in five cases, anger was seen, in a not-very-legal impression, as the motive.

Then there were references to recent incidents in the north. Let me first say that we regret each and every security incident, because each incident adds to the fears of the Kosovo Serbs. I will cite an example: of the four most recent incidents, one was an attack on a petrol station. It is clear that it was robbery and, by all indications, Serb-on-Serb. There was a regrettable killing of a young man in Zvecan. The police immediately interviewed two suspects, neither one of which was Albanian. A third incident involving a Serb Orthodox priest who was driving in his car and was attacked with his family. Two days ago, the police arrested a Kosovo Serb policeman as the suspect in that case.

Once again, I just want to underline that we should not jump to conclusions. We have to address these incidents, we have to prevent them and we have to investigate them. But facts do not bear out what we had heard on that point.

I do welcome the statement by Mrs. Raskovic-Ivic that she considers it to be of utmost importance that the Kosovo Serbs should participate. She also rightly says that their participation must be meaningful. I would suggest that we let them participate and let them decide whether their participation is meaningful. For two years, we have reserved two ministerial positions for Kosovo Serbs; they are still vacant. We have 10 reserved seats in the Assembly; they are still waiting. We have several deputy ministerial posts; they are still waiting. But I agree that Kosovo Serb participation should be meaningful. Let us give them a chance and let them decide whether it is meaningful.

There were several references to returns, and I for one certainly regret that we have seen so few returns. In fact, for me personally it is one of my most serious regrets over the past two years. I thought I had come to the job with a certain experience on return and humanitarian issues. I thought that I could make an impact. I have to accept that the numbers remain very, very low.

However, I think we have to accept that the conditions have gradually been put in place for returns. We have the Protocol on Returns; I welcome the very constructive engagement of Belgrade in that. That is now being developed into a plan of action in which we have the direct involvement of the internally displaced persons. We are doing this on behalf of the internally displaced persons. I do believe that the very fact that the plan of action is now being developed with the direct involvement of internally displaced persons could lead to larger returns. We will have to wait and see. It is certainly an area in which we have not seen the kind of results we must see.

There were some concerns expressed that the ethnic bus lines will cease to operate. That is not correct. They will be taken over lock, stock and barrel by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. They will be taking over the operation that UNMIK has been running for the past seven years, so it will of course continue and both KFOR and UNMIK will be there in total support of those bus lines and also to make sure that there are no incidents.

Talking about incidents, there was some reference to the repeated stoning of buses. Our police statistics will show that, over the first five months of this year, some 1,400 minority buses drove through Kosovo. There were stoning incidents in six of the 1,400 journeys, and five arrests have been made. I still regret the sixth. There should not be one single stoning incident, and I know that this is something that the Provisional Institutions take very seriously. We have to make sure that it does not happen.

Finally, there was some reference to corruption at the airport. Let me just refer to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which is based on shortcomings up to and including 2003 — in other words, it is three years out of date. Since then, considerable measures have been taken. There has been overall management reform and criminal action against a few who were found to have been conducting their activities in a way that is not acceptable, and disciplinary action has also been taken.

Let me just say that the airport is actually a success story for Kosovo. It has just won the Best Airport 2006 award in the category "Under 1 million passengers per year" from Airports Council International. I believe that is a very, very strong reflection of the solid management of the international airport of Kosovo.

Once again, this is my sixth and last report to the Security Council since assuming my post. I believe that, together, we have come a long way, but we also know that there is still a considerable way to travel before we get to the kind of society we all want to see in Kosovo. I am grateful for the role played by this Council in moving the process forward and for its decisions to launch the comprehensive review last May and the status process last October. And as I leave, I certainly count on the Security Council to see the process through to what I hope will be an early and successful conclusion. It will be successful only if the beneficiaries are the people of Kosovo and of the region. I count on all Council members to make sure that our focus is on the people of Kosovo and of the region.

The President: There are no more speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.